



Choosing Quality Childcare for Children under 5

Below is key information to take particular note of when visiting/choosing the right nursery for your child. We have also enclosed a 'Choosing Quality Childcare' questionnaire that you can take with you when visiting nurseries to help you make your decision.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

If your child has special educational needs or a disability, speak to the nursery management team as they will be able to explain their own specific policy for SEND and their Inclusion Policy.

Disclosure and Barring Service

It is the responsibility of the nursery management team to ensure all staff have an up to date DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check to ensure their suitability to work with children. You can ask to see their records.

Settling In / Key Person Approach

All childcare providers should have a settling in policy/procedure that allows you to stay with your child for as long as is necessary. This should involve several visits, where you gradually leave your child for longer periods of time. You will also be designated a member of staff known as the Key Person. This person is your contact if you want to discuss anything about your child and who during the day carries out the main care routines for your child, e.g. changing their nappy, taking them to the toilet, feeding them and settling them to sleep. This person will ensure your wishes are considered and your individual child's needs are met within the group. They should be available for you to talk to at the beginning or the end of your child's day/session.

Parental Involvement

Parents' knowledge of their own child is invaluable and will help to influence the work the staff of the nursery do with your child. Ask how your child's development is monitored and evidenced and how you will be kept informed of your child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. Most nurseries provide parents with newsletters, parents' evenings and other events.

Ratios

The minimum staffing ratios required by Ofsted are: 1:3 children under 2 years 1:4 children aged 2 years 1:8 children aged 3-7 years Many nurseries will have higher staffing ratios than these, to cover lunch periods, holidays and other absences. 50% of all staff working in the nursery should hold a level 3 NVQ qualification or the equivalent. There should never be fewer than 2 adults on duty at any time, regardless of how few children are in the nursery. Ofsted also require that senior staff caring for children under the age of two in a nursery have at least two years post qualification experience.



Outdoor Play

Playing outside is really important for children. Some nurseries offer this by keeping the door open to the outdoor play area in order to give children free access to it. Sometimes this is difficult, especially in the cold weather. However, it is important for children to be able to go outside and nurseries should accommodate this by making sure the children have easy access to their outdoor clothes and boots and that there is a staff member available to go outside when needed. The children should regularly be taken for walks in the local area and on some visits throughout the year.

Toys & Equipment

The toys and equipment in the nursery should reflect diversity and support children with special needs. The equipment should be easily accessible, e.g. low level so that the children can choose their own activities. There should be some activities that are available regularly i.e. sand, water, role play, small work, book corner (this should contain reference books as well as story books), drawing and colouring equipment, painting, dough, creative resources, construction materials, games, equipment for problem solving including weighing and measuring. The children should be busy and involved in the activities. It is important that children are allowed to develop their creative skills using both natural and manmade resources. Children should be given plenty of time to develop their own ideas. Children need access to natural materials to help them understand the world around them and develop all of their senses.

Displays

There should be photographs and displays (ideally child height) to show you what activities the children have been involved in. Often the activities your child undertakes do not have a finished product so this will be the only way you will know that they have undertaken these activities.

Observation

It is important that staff observe the children regularly. Observations are important as they allow staff to see what stage your child is at and what opportunities they need to be given to help them progress. When carrying out observations staff should stand back and allow children to play, only becoming involved when it is necessary to support the child. Experienced staff will be aware of a child needing support or a child needing an additional piece of equipment.

Health, Safety & Diet

Children should be provided with a healthy diet (ask to see menus) and water should be available to the children at all times. If your child becomes ill, staff will follow their appropriate policy and



procedure. It is important that staff and visitors do not wear outdoor footwear in the Baby Room as young babies will be mouthing objects and crawling on the floor.